

CAN SUFFERERS LEAD NORMAL LIVES?

Research is under way to find new medications and methods of treating Tourette Syndrome, and particularly to help those patients who do not respond well to current medication.

In the meantime, the majority of people with Tourette Syndrome can lead relatively normal, active lives.

The Syndrome may not affect either intelligence or longevity. For example, it is now believed that Dr. Samuel Johnson, the noted 18th century British writer, lexicographer and philosopher, suffered a severe form of the disorder. Despite that, he made both a significant contribution to the world of letters and lived to 75 – a ripe old age in the 1700s.

The major problem faced by those for whom drug treatment is less than 100 per cent effective is the ridicule and rejection they often receive from peers, relatives, teachers and others.

No doubt about it, it can be uncomfortable and upsetting to be around someone suffering from Tourette Syndrome. But if you are, try to be understanding. Understand that they are not purposely disruptive. Understand, if their symptoms are severe, that they are neither insane nor "possessed". Understand that they simply cannot control themselves.

Beneath the involuntary movements and utterances may well be a person worth knowing, a person who will respond to your kindness and encouragement, perhaps even another Dr. Samuel Johnson with an important contribution to make to society.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

For more information about this disorder, contact the Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada at Unit 17, 153 Bridgeland Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6A 1P7.

The Foundation is a voluntary, non-profit organization composed of individuals afflicted with Tourette Syndrome, their relatives and other interested people. This Foundation is working to encourage proper diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome, which until recently was often misdiagnosed because of its perplexing nature, and because of the lack of diagnostic information.

The Foundation is also trying to increase public knowledge and understanding of the disorder. And it is raising funds to support research into the nature and causes of Tourette Syndrome. It is hoped eventually that research will lead to a cure.



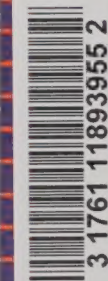
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TOURETTE SYNDROME
A TREATABLE TIC DISORDER

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The problem with some "problem children"

TOURETTE SYNDROME

Children with problems need special understanding, care and love, and some require special medical attention. A minority of children with difficulties may be suffering from a rare, little known disorder of obscure origin known as Tourette Syndrome.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE IT

Tourette Syndrome is named after the French doctor Gilles de la Tourette who first described the affliction in 1885.

Tourette Syndrome first appears in childhood, most often between the ages of two and 14.

The most recognizable symptoms of Tourette Syndrome are involuntary body and vocal tics. That is, a part of the child's face or body may occasionally jerk or twitch and the child may make noises that are disrupting and unsettling to other people.

Where these symptoms are pronounced, it will generally be readily recognized that the child has a problem requiring medical treatment. When they are not so pronounced, early stages of Tourette Syndrome are often mistakenly regarded as transient tics of childhood that will go away as the child matures.

Complicating recognition is the fact that symptoms of Tourette Syndrome change regularly. Symptoms disappear, sometimes for months or even years at a time, only to reappear again in different forms. Often, with their reappearance and the passing of time, they become worse. The simple tic may turn into multiple tics, and the throat-clearing noises may turn into uncontrollable swearing, involuntary utterances or even screams. Only in rare instances does the disorder disappear for good.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

The first and most important step with a child who exhibits these symptoms is to recognize Tourette Syndrome for what it is—a little known disorder of compulsive and involuntary movements and utterances that require medical attention.

The second important step is to get treatment for the child. The sooner Tourette Syndrome is correctly diagnosed and treatment begun, the better for everyone concerned. Left untreated, the child with Tourette Syndrome experiences great difficulties with schooling and social development, thus compounding and adding to the already heavy burden of the affliction.

There is, as yet, no cure for Tourette Syndrome, but in most cases the disorder can be controlled.

In three out of four people, the symptoms can be either eliminated entirely or greatly reduced by the use of chemotherapy.

Each patient is affected differently by the medication. Under the direction of a physician skilled in its use, small amounts of medication are administered initially, then gradually increased to the point where the patient gets maximum relief from the symptoms with a minimum of side effects.